

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 00369 281415Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----290019Z 088182 /66
R 281355Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3092

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 0369

EXDIS

FOR ASST SECRETARY SCHLAUDEMANN AND DESIGNEE TODMAN
FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINS, PINR, SHUM, UY
SUBJ: POSSIBLE VISIT OF URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA

1. DURING MY LUNCHEON TALK WITH PEREZ CALDAS YESTERDAY (JANUARY WW) HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, ALEJANDRO ROVIRA WERE TO GO TO WASHINGTON SOON TO DISCUSS RELATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. BELIEVING THAT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A GOOD IDEA, AT LEAST IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, I ATTEMPTED TO REDUCE ENTHUSIASM BY SUGGESTING THAT HIS VISIT IN THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF THERE WERE SOME OTHER OCCASION LEGITIMATELY MOTIVATING A TRIP TO WASHINGTON. I ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT THE MINISTER'S HEALTH (HE SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK JUST BEFORE TAKING OFFICE), AND IN GENERAL SHOWED NO PARTICULAR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE IDEA AS OF NOW. AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, HOWEVER, AND AFTER URUGUAY MAY HAVE TAKEN SOME STEPS TO IMPROVE ITS SITUATION, SUCH A VISIT MAY WELL HAVE MERIT. I AM MENTIONING THIS TO ALERT THE DEPARTMENT TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT PEREZ CALDAS MAY RAISE THIS ON HIS RETURN.

2. IN A LATER CONVERSATION WHICH THE DCM HAD WITH URUGUAY'S UN AMBASSADOR GIAMBRUNO, THE LATTER CONFIRMED THE VARIOUS
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INTERESTING POINTS WHICH PEREZ CALDAS HAD MADE TO ME (MVD 359) SUCH AS THE "ACTION COMMITTEE" ON HUMAN RIGHTS. GIAMBRUNO ALSO MENTIONED DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA BUT SAYS HE COUNSELED DELAY UNTIL THE VISIT COULD BE RELATED TO SOME OTHER PURPOSE AND, ESPECIALLY, AFTER SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON BETTERMENT OF THE SITUATION.

3. ANOTHER POINT OF POSSIBLE INTEREST WHICH PEREZ CALDAS RAISED WAS HIS SUGGESTION IN THESE DISCUSSIONS THAT AN EMBARGO ON WILSON FERREIRA ALDUNATE'S PROPERTIES BE LIFTED. HE SAYS HE POINTED OUT HOW ADVERSE THE REACTION WAS TO THIS EMBARGO AS IT CAME AT A TIME WHEN WILSON FERREIRA WAS A WITNESS BE-

FORE THE U.S. CONGRESS AND LED TO EXAGGERATED CHARGES THAT HIS PROPERTIES HAD BEEN "CONFISCATED" AND TO THE CHARGE AS WELL THAT THE GOU'S ACTION WAS AN EFFORT TO MUSSLE AND PUNISH A WITNESS BEFORE THE U.S. CONGRESS. THE WHOLE THING, PEREZ CALDAS RIGHTLY POINTED OUT, WAS AN EXAMPLE OF INCREDIBLY STUPID TIMING REGARDLESS OF WHETHER JUSTIFIED IN URUGUAYAN LAW AND ALSO THAT IT HAD ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING PRACTICAL SINCE, IN FACT, THE PROPERTIES CONTINUED TO BE MANAGED BY WILSON FERREIRA'S FAMILY AS INTERVENTORS. I TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT WHEREAS IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ERASE THE EFFECT OF THE ACTION ITSELF, I COULD SEE NOTHING BUT BENEFIT TO URUGUAY FROM LIFTING THE EMBARGO IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIONS AND THE IMAGE IT PROJECTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MONTEV00369
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770032-0017
Format: TEL
From: MONTEVIDEO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977019/aaaaahdm.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1cf0e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3677714
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE VISIT OF URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER ROVIRA
TAGS: PDIP, PINS, PINR, SHUM, OVIP, UY, US, (ROVIRA, ALEJADRO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1cf0e4dd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009